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ABSTRACT

Studies on the relationship between research and development (R&D) and public policymaking processes are reviewed. Attention is directed to R&D utilization in Sweden and other countries. The publications are grouped into four categories: policymaking and knowledge utilization, research policy, higher education policy, and knowledge utilization in higher education policy. In addition to two literature reviews concerning utilization of social research in policymaking, the scope of the publications cover: circumstances enabling policy intellectuals to serve as intermediaries between policymakers and research; problems surrounding knowledge utilization in planning processes; the work of Charles Lindblom and Aaron Wildavsky; the growing interest of both decisionmakers and researchers in the later stages of the decisionmaking process; social research and Swedish government commissions; research policy in Scandinavian countries; trade union research policy; higher education policy in Sweden, France, and Great Britain; Swedish policy concerning uniform higher education; values and higher education policy; Swedish R&D activities in higher education; the regionalization of Swedish higher education; and trends in R&D production and utilization in Sweden since 1930. A list of 23 publications is appended. (SW)

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## INTRODUCTION

Questions concerning the role and social usefulness of research have, of course, been discussed ever since research became an identifiable social phenomenon. For a long time, however, most contributions to the debate were characterized by highflown rhetoric and a distinct absence of the empirical approach which researchers themselves. at least, were swift to demand in other connections. For just over a decade now, however, there has existed relatively extensive research into the problem of research utilization, and this research is still growing rapidly. Above all in the USA, but with ramifications in many other countries, there now exists a fairly vigorous line of research, most frequently termed "research utilization" or, in a more general vein, "knowledge utilization". There has been a consistent tendency in the research sector for simple, "automatic" models of research utilization to be viewed in a critical light. This has been expecially the case with models concerning the relationship between social research and public policy making. When research findings are utilized, the argument goes, their uti ization is usually indirect and unplanned.

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At the same time, research into planning and policy-making processes in general has been intensified and has acquired a partially new focus. Although there are widely divergent schools of thought here, it is reasonable to say that the dominant tendency even here has implied criticism and querying of simple, rationalistic images of such processes. Increasing emphasis has been put on fundamental problems connected with objectives, conflicting interests, sectorization tendencies, implementation and evaluation. Rationalism has been forced to give way to what is sometimes called post-rationalism.

Generally speaking, these tendencies in international debate and research would seem to have made remarkably little headway in Swedish public debate and social research. True, the implicit faith in planning which was characteristic of the 1960s and early 1970s has subsided to a certain extent, and more attention is being devoted to the later phases of the public policy-making process, i.e. implementation and evaluation activities. But optimism about the possibilities of more rational decision making has certainly not waned. It is even arguable that such optimism has grown in the wake of the new exercises in national research planning. Actually, there has been no real problematization of the role of research in public activities. Insofar as problems exist, solutions are assumed to be available. For the most part these solutions take the form of more resources for research, increased control and measures to promote the popularization and dissemination of research findings.

## POINTS OF INQUIRY

Faced with this powerful unanimity and optimism, one feels it is almost impertinent to beg to differ, to disrupt the idyll. This, however, is what we have tried to do in the project "R&D and public policy making". With reference to both the research traditions mentioned above, we have made it our task to problematize the three basic concepts involved in a study of the relationship between research and development and public policy-making processes, viz research, the policy-making process and research utilization.

The project has been of an explicitly exploratory character. It would have been possible to include more elements of hypothesis testing, but it was judged more fruitful to give activities a general focus. The idea was that we would later return with more narrowly delimited points of inquiry in future projects. The general points of inquiry intended to guide our activities were phrased as follows:

a) To what extent is social scientific R&D utilized in public policy-making?

b) In what way are R&D findings utilized in public policy-making processes?

c) What characteristics of the policy-making processes influence the nature and scope of utilization?

d) What characteristics of R&D findings influence their utilization?

e) What images of research utilization, policy-making processes and R&D findings predominate in Swedish research policy?

f) What conclusions with regard to (e) can be drawn from the analyses concerning (a)-(d)?

Although the main focus of the project was theoretical, we felt that an empirical foundation was desirable. In view of the character of the project and the research background of the project team, it was therefore natural to look for this foundation in research and higher education policy. The utilization of R&D in Swedish higher education policy ought to provide and interesting and coherent field in this respect.

## RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Considering the broad focus and general strategy of the project, it was hardly to be expected that the results could be presented in one short publication or, still less, in the form of a few pregnant sentences. Instead the following account takes the form of a review of the publications from the project - instructions for further reading, one might say. A simple classification has been undertaken for this purpose. The publications (23 in number) are grouped into four categories: (a) policy-making and knowledge utilization; (b) research policy; (c) higher education policy; and (d) knowledge utilization in higher education policy. This classification has involved some distortion of reality in that several publications could reasonably have been placed in more than one category.

Figures in brackets in this review indicate the number of the publication concerned according to the complete list appended.

(a) Policy-making and knowledge utilization

It seemed natural during an introductory phase of the project to undertake a review of the growing volume of international literature concerning knowledge utilization. The results were presented in an essay entitled "Social Research and Public Policy-Making: An Overview" by Rune Premfors (3). In this essay it was noted among other things that research in the field was above all concerned with two things. First it was aimed at accounting for what seemed to be a very low utilization of social research in public reforms and other decisions. A very large number and variety of explanatory factors have been launched in connection with three main variables: research and researchers; decision makers and decision-making processes; and communications between researchers and decision makers. The second main task of this research was that of developing the concept of research utilization. As has already been intimated, in most cases this meant heavily criticizing simple models, or "engineering models" as they were often called. Instead various approaches were launched which emphasized indirect and long-term effects of research, effects which were involved in all phases of the policy-making process. These approaches were often collectively termed "enlightenment models".

A further review of literature was undertaken in a later essay by Björn Wittrock, "Social Knowledge, Public Policy and Social Betterment: A Review of Current Research on Knowledge Utilization in Policy-Making" (16). The main focus here was on two of the foremost contributions to this field of resarch in recent years: Lindblom & Cohen's *Usable Knowledge* and Rule's *Insight and Social Betterment*. The main purpose of this essay was twofold. Firstly, and mainly with reference to both these works, it was aimed at showing the essential need for knowledge utilization research transcending a simple dichotomy between "engineering" an "enlightenment" as models and taking into account phenomena on the boundary line between traditional academic research and genuine policy processes, including contributions such as futures studies which could help to delimit the host of decision-making alternatives, the "policy space", under consideration. The second purpose was to point out the shortcomings of Lindblom's and Cohen's basic distinction between analytical and interactive problem solving.

In the essay "Planning, Pluralism, and Policy Intellectuals" (23), Björn Wittrock widens the inquiry to include the circumstances making it possible for a special profession, "policy intellectuals", to play a crucial role as intermediaries between policy-makers and research. A main thrust of

the article is that there is a model of knowledge utilization which might be termed *dispositional* and which transcends the dichotomy of "engineering" and "enlightenment". The knowledge utilization process is then neither arbitrary and haphazard, nor entirely preprogrammed; important policy research must be there to be utilized and if conditions are propitious and important actors available, these findings might well have an impact.

Within the project, however, we have also been more generally concerned with various aspects of public policy-making. One of the most important lessons of research into research utilization can be termed the thesis of "the primacy of the policy-making process": the scope and direction of utilization are to a very great extent determined by the general characteristics of the policy-making process. Thus in a contribution to a NBUC conference in January 1980, Björn Wittrock deals with the development of the planning concept (5), while Rune Premfors, in another contribution, an essay entitled "Social research and public planning" (6), deals with problems surrounding knowledge utilization in planning processes (in the higher education sector and elsewhere). In a later essay, Rune Premfors examines the total scientific output of two of the foremost theorists in this field, Charles Lindblom and Aaron Wildavsky (9).

In the report entitled "Implementation and evaluation of public policy" (12), Rune Premfors discusses the growing interest of both decision makers and researchers in the later stages of the decision-making process. This essay also includes a review of problems and schools of thought in the two growing research traditions of implementation analysis and evaluation research, as well as a discussion of the problem of utilization.

Swedish Government Commissions have, for quite sound reasons, been regarded as a meething point of research and policy development. This problem field is dealt with in the essay "Social Research and Governmental Commissions in Sweden" (21) by Rune Premfors, partly in the form of a case study of the role of Government Commissions in the field of higher education.

Finally, mention can be made under this heading of two reviews by Björn Wittrock. One of them (8) examines a work on the very interesting phase of socially relevant research which occurred in England at about the turn of the century. The second article (20) reviews the OECD study dealing with the role of social research in Finland.

(b) Research policy

Our main contribution under this heading, Björn Wittrock's "Science Policy and the Challenge to the Welfare State" (14), is a broad analysis of research policy in the Scandinavian countries, with particular reference to developments in Sweden. It is noted among other things that research policy has come to occupy on increaingly prominent position on the political agenda in recent years and that increasing expectations are now being attached to it. At the same time, the development sometimes referred to as "the crisis of the welfare state" has generated a series of difficulties in research policy which are manifested, for example, by a number of contradictions and imbalances within this field. This is very much true of the Swedish policy of "sectoral research".

One of the more prominent features of the development of Swedish research policy during the 1970s was the growing involvement of the trade union organizations. In a report entitled "Trade union research policy" (7), Rune Premfors examines the scale and focus of this involvement. The programmes of the three main union confederations are compared and an effort is made to predict some of the consequences of this trade union mobilization.

(c) Higher education policy

In his essay "Managing Uncertainty or Foreclosing the Options: California University Planning in a Comparative Perspective" (11), written after field studies on the spot, Björn Wittrock examines a specific planning process. A number of constraints are identified as having impeded a genuine search for alternative paths of development. The conditions for establishing option-creating planning in a university system are discussed with reference to literature on the theory of planning. The relevance of a *dispositional* approach to *policy innovation* is a main theme of the article.

Within the framework of the project, Rune Premfors has written several essays on higher education policy. Some of these have had an internationally comparative focus. In "National Policy Styles and Higher Education" (10), he asks whether higher education policy in three countries (Sweden, France and Great Britain) is characterized by the same "policy style" as is considered, in the literature, to be characteristic of these countries generally. The answer is affirmative on the whole, but it is also emphasized that this applies above all to the policy formulation phase. Where implementation and effects are concerned, the outcome is more likely to be determined by "specifically sectoral" rather than "specifically national" factors. Another essay with a comparative focus, "New Patterns of Authority in Higher Education" (15),

analyses the development of patterns of power and influence in the higher education sector in the member countries of the OECD. Finally, in a third essay, "Numbers and Beyond: Access Policy in an International Perspective" (19), a study is made of quantitative developments in higher education in the industrialized countries. This essay also discusses the problem of meritocracy in a normative perspective.

A further essay "Integrated Higher Education: The Swedish Experience" (13), deals with the central portion of Swedish policy concerning "uniform higher education". Policy formulation, policy content and implementation are analysed. Finally an effort is made to compare the outcome hitherto with the original intentions. Lastly, the essay "Values and Higher Education Policy" (17) employs another approach to Swedish higher education policy. The idea tested is that policy can be regarded as a number of trade-offs between a set of fundamental values. In the case of higher education policy, the values of equality, excellence, autonomy, accountability and efficiency are identified as being particularly relevant.

(d) Knowledge utilization in higher education policy

The first publication from the project - which was made possible by a planning grant - was the essay "Research and Development for Higher Education in Sweden: Some Conceptual and Policy Problems" (1), by Rune Premfors and Björn Wittrock. This essay examines Swedish R&D activities in higher education with particular emphasis on the R&D inputs of the NBUC. The essay was written for the NBUC international research conference in 1978, and in the report on that conference Rune Premfors also discusses possible future studies of R&D utilization in the higher education sector (2).

The first empirical findings could then be presented in the report "Analysis in Politics: The Regionalization of Swedish Higher Education" (18). This is a close scrutiny of the interaction of various forms of analysis and research and, on the other hand, policy development concerning the localization of higher education. Three key decisions are analysed, viz the foundation of Umeå University, the four branch universities and the localization recommendations made by the U 68 Commission. Despite the fairly impressive analytical efforts accompanying the two last mentioned decision-making processes, it is argued in the essay that these had only a marginal effect on the main outlines of policy. The latter were instead conditioned by what can be collectively termed "social interaction", i.e. factors connected with market mechanisms and politics.

In what can be termed the "final report" for our part in this field - "Research and Policy-Making in Swedish Higher Education" (22) - a broad approach is adopted to the subject of knowledge utilization in higher education policy. This study can be said to contain three specific analyses. The first is a description of how various forms of R&D for higher education have developed from the 1930s onwards. The occurrence of R&D utilization during the same period is then examined in five differens policy fields: quantitative planning, social recruitment, governance, the localization of universities and colleges, and teaching and learning. Finally, five general aspects of the sector are discussed which have been referred to in international literature as particularly relevant to the scope and direction of R&D utilization in the policy-making process. In all brevity it is concluded that, although R&D results have been utilized in decision making, no single case can be identified in which they have decisively influenced the course of policy. In the typical instance, utilization has taken the form of "partisan use", i.e. results have been used to reinforce and legitimize standpoints already adopted on other grounds. In a couple of cases, however, it is possible to speak of important, indirect and long-term utilization of the enlightenment type. In two other cases one finds tangible instrumental utilization.

## CONCLUSION

As has already been indicated, the project was deliberately given a pronouncedly exploratory focus, both on account of the state of knowledge and with the ulterior intention of a sequel to the project "R&D and public policy-making". The subsequent project ought therefore to have a more definitely empirical focus. A continuation project under the title "Use of sectoral research" has now been started by Rune Premfors (see *R&D for higher education* 1982:1. Briefly, this new project involves a critical scrutiny of the premise of sectoral research policy to the effect that R&D planned and financed by the sectoral R&D agencies (which are at least 50 or 60 in number) is utilized in public policy-making and practice. A number of hypotheses concerning research utilization which have been formulated in the international literature are also being tested in the course of the project. Mention was also made, already in the grant application of 1981, of the possibility of combining the institutionally oriented analysis with a study of social research and research organization in a historical and comparative perspective. We deem it to be of great importance that an inquiry of this kind be initiated in one form or another.

Rune Premfors

Björn Wittrock

1983-04-18

## PUBLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT

(1) Rune Premfors & Björn Wittrock, "Research and Development for Higher Education in Sweden: Some Conceptual and Policy Problems", *Research into Higher Education: Processes and Structures* (NBUC 1979), s 281-304.

(2) Rune Premfors, "Report from Discussion Group 5", *Research into Higher Education: Processes and Structures* (NBUC 1979) s 305-318.

(3) Rune Premfors, "Social Research and Public Policy-Making: An Overview", *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift*, 1979:4, s 281-290.

(4) Rune Premfors, "FoU och offentligt beslutsfattande", *FoU för högskolan*, 1980:2 (UHÄ 1980), 11 s.

(5) Björn Wittrock, "Långsiktig planering och forskning: Inledning", *Studier av långsiktig planering och av sektoriell forskning* (UHÄ-rapport 1980:14), s 33-39.

(6) Rune Premfors, "Samhällsforskning och offentlig planering", *Studier av långsiktig planering och av sektoriell forskning* (UHÄ-rapport 1980:14), s 7-32.

(7) Rune Premfors, "Facklig forskningspolitik. De fackliga huvudorganisationernas program och aktiviteter". GSHR-rapport 7, 1980; även publicerad som rapport nr 34-U (1981) av FRN, 49 s.

(8) Björn Wittrock, "Reba N. Soffer: Ethics and Society in England: The Revolution in the Social Sciences 1870-1914", *Acta Sociologica 23*, 4 (1980), s 356-358.

(9) Rune Premfors, "Review Article: Charles Lindblom and Aaron Wildavsky", GSHR-rapport 9, 1980; även i *British Journal of Political Science, 11* (April 1980), s 201-225.

(10) Rune Premfors, "National Policy Styles and Higher Education: France, Sweden and the United Kingdom", GSHR-rapport 10, 1980; även i *European Journal of Education*, 16, 2 (1981), s 253-262.

(11) Björn Wittrock, "Managing Uncertainty or Foreclosing the Options: California University Planning in a Comparative Perspective", GSHR-rapport 11, 1981; även i *European Journal of Education*, 17, 3 (1982), s 307-318.

(12) Rune Premfors, "Genomförande och utvärdering av offententlig politik", GSHR-rapport 12, 1981, 44 s.

(13) Rune Premfors, "Integrated Higher Education: The Swedish Experience", GSHR-rapport 14, 1981; även med titeln "Das schwedische Modell eines integrierten Hochschulsystems" i H. Hermanns m fl (red), *Integrierthe Hochschulmodelle* Frankfurt: Campus, (1982), s 127-144.

(14) Björn Wittrock, "Science Policy and the Challenge to the Welfare State, GSHR-rapport 16, 1981; även i *West European Politics 3*, 3 (October 1980), s 358-372.

(15) Rune Premfors, *New Patterns of Authority in Higher Education* (Paris: OECD, 1981), 21 s.

(16) Björn Wittrock, "Social Knowledge, Public Policy and Social Betterment: A Review of Current Research on Knowledge Utilization in Policy-Making", GSHR-rapport 17, 1982; även i *European Journal of Political Research* 10 (1982), s 83-89.

(17) Rune Premfors, "Values and Higher Education Policy", GSHR-rapport 18, 1982; även i *Policy Sciences* 14 (1982), s 365-378.

(18) Rune Premfors, "Analysis in Politics: The Regionalization of Swedish Higher Education", GSHR-rapport 19, 1982, 28 s; i *Comparative Education Review.*

(19) Rune Premfors, "Numbers and Beyond: Access Policy in an International Perspective", GSHR-rapport 20, 1982, 28 s; kommer i *Journal of Higher Education* under 1983.

(20) Björn Wittrock, "Social Sciences Policy in Finland: Review of an OECD Report", 5 s; kommer i *European Journal of Education* under 1983.

(21) Rune Premfors, "Social Research and Governmental Commissions in Sweden", GSHR-rapport 22, 1982, 31 s; kommer i *American Behavioral Scientist* 26, 5 (May/June 1983).

(22) Rune Premfors, "Research and Policy-Making in Swedish Higher Education", GSHR-rapport 24, 1982, 74 s; kommer i M. Kogan and T. Husén (ed), *Researchers and Policy-Makers in Education* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983).

(23) Björn Wittrock, "Planning, Pluralism, and Policy Intellectuals", 15 s; kommer i M. Kogan and T. Husén (eds), *op.cit.*